

Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft Awards Contracts

By Justin Ward, MMA Public Affairs

Boeing Co. and Lockheed Martin Corp. were each awarded \$7 million Defense contracts on 10 Sept. for the Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) program Component Advanced Development (CAD) work effort, NAVAIR officials said. MMA will recapitalize the capabilities of the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF), providing dominance in ASW, ASuW, and maritime reconnaissance and surveillance environments well into the 21st Century.

The contracts represent the first five months of an 18-month industry effort to support MMA CAD. The purpose of CAD is to perform requirements analysis in support of the Operational Requirements Document (ORD) development, define the MMA system architecture, quantify and reduce MMA system risks, evaluate total ownership costs, and develop detailed plans and schedules for each MMA system alternative.

CAD will continue until Milestone B, at which time the System Development and Demonstration phase will commence. The schedule beyond MS B is alternative-dependent, however an Initial Operational Capability of 2012 is targeted.

MMA, a Naval Air Systems Command program under PMA-290, is a key capability provider in the CNO's Transformation Roadmap (Sea Strike, Sea Shield, Sea Basing). It will have the significant ability to operate with U.S. and Coalition forces in defending the Homeland against external attacks, in deterring aggression and coercion in critical regions, in swiftly defeating adversaries in two overlapping wars while preserving options for a decisive victory in one of those conflicts; and in conducting a limited number of lesser contingency operations. MMA will transform how the MPRF will train, man, operate and deploy. A modernized air vehicle with greater operational availability, backed by a state of the art simulation and on-board training architecture, will extract more combat capability with a smaller force and less infrastructure.

MMA will carry forward the long-standing characteristic of the MPRF to perform multiple missions simultaneously. This valuable capability has been adapted over the last 50 years to serve well the National Defense, and is envisioned to provide the same flexibility well into the mid-21st Century. The MPRF has been a transformational force throughout its history by consistently evolving to meet the next threat while maintaining its robust core capability of Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW), Anti-surface Warfare (ASuW) and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR).

MMA helps maintain NAVAIR's platinum standards by enabling new concepts of operations (CONOPS) for the MPRF by coupling the integration of Broad Area Maritime Surveillance (BAMS) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) with a flexible, manned platform equipped with modern ASW and ASuW sensors (and exploiting the inherent ISR capability those sensor suites provide). MMA is transformational as the Navy's bridge to Unmanned Aviation later this century.

MMA is the ideal platform (at the right time) to realize the CNO's goals of focusing on future readiness, reshaping to a "capabilities" based force, and transforming how the Navy will fight in "Sea Power 21".

In support of the Secretary of Defense's objective of acquisition streamlining, the Navy has identified MMA as a program that will receive that special consideration in the form of support for adequate and stable funding, quicker routing and staffing of documentation, "stakeholder" support from the outset that focuses on providing a product to the Fleet in the shortest amount of time. This process is evolving and will be tailored to each candidate program. Eventually, the streamlining initiative will become part of the process but in the meantime, MMA will enjoy visibility at the highest levels of the Navy and OSD.

Vice Admiral Joseph Dyer, Commander of Naval Air Systems Command, said in this spring's issue of Wings of Gold: "Programs like this one...help us keep our commitment to the warfighter: Reign supreme. Return in glory."